

Group Guidance Services to Improve Students' Social Skills in the School Environment

Samsidar✉

Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Jambi, Indonesia

e-mail: *dharsamsidar@gmail.com

INFO ARTIKEL

Input :
December 14, 2024
Revised :
January 16, 2025
Approved :
January 20, 2025
Published :
January 25, 2025

Keywords:

group guidance, social skills, social interaction, junior high school

ABSTRAK

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of group guidance services in improving students' social skills in the school environment. Social skills are fundamental competencies that support students' success both academically and in their daily lives. This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design (one-group pretest-posttest design) involving 30 eighth-grade students at a junior high school selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Social Skills Scale that had been tested for validity and reliability, and subsequently analyzed using the Paired Sample T-Test through SPSS 25.0. The results revealed a significant difference between students' social skills scores before and after participating in group guidance services ($t = -12.847$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The mean social skills score increased from 78.47 at pretest to 96.83 at posttest, yielding a mean gain of 18.37 points. Techniques applied in the group guidance sessions included group discussion, sociodrama, cooperative games, and homeroom activities. These findings confirm that structured group guidance services facilitated by an active counselor can significantly improve students' social interaction, interpersonal communication, empathy, and social ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Social skills represent one of the most fundamental competencies required by every individual, including students in school settings. The ability to interact, communicate, empathize, and adhere to social norms in daily life not only affects students' emotional well-being but also their academic achievement and long-term personality development. In the context of school, students are expected to adapt to dynamic social environments, build positive relationships with peers, teachers, and school staff, and resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively.



However, field realities indicate that not all students possess adequate social skills. Various studies have identified significant social problems among students, such as poor communication skills, passive behavior in group interactions, aggressive tendencies, or social withdrawal (Azhar & Sunawan, 2025). These conditions are often triggered by limited opportunities for students to practice and develop their social skills in safe and structured environments. If left unaddressed, deficits in social skills can lead to poor academic performance, increased bullying, and the formation of antisocial behavior.

Guidance and counseling (GC) services in schools play a crucial role in addressing students' social development challenges. One of the most relevant and effective services for this purpose is group guidance. Group guidance is a service that utilizes group dynamics as a medium for behavioral change and self-development. In group guidance sessions, students have opportunities to share experiences, express opinions, practice communication skills, and apply social values in a controlled and counselor-facilitated environment (Fauzi & Yustiana, 2024).

Literature reviews indicate that various techniques employed in group guidance—such as group discussion, sociodrama, cooperative games, homeroom, and assertiveness training—have been proven effective in improving students' social skills. Amalia and Rusman (2025) found that group guidance significantly enhanced the social interaction skills of junior high school students, while Noperiyanti and Hasibuan (2025) demonstrated that cooperative game techniques within group guidance settings substantially raised social skills scores. Similar findings were reported by Maisunah (2021), who used sociodrama to improve students' communication skills, and by Azizah and Murtafi'ah (2021), who demonstrated the effectiveness of homeroom techniques in enhancing students' social interaction.

While prior studies have made meaningful contributions to the development of GC services, many relied on classroom action research or descriptive qualitative designs that have limitations in terms of generalizability. Therefore, this study was designed using a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design to obtain more measurable evidence of the effectiveness of group guidance in improving students' social skills. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) describe students' social skills before and after participating in group guidance services, and (2) test the statistical significance of improvement in students' social skills following group guidance intervention.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, specifically using the one-group pretest-posttest model. In this design, no control group was used; instead, comparisons were made between conditions before (pretest) and after (posttest) the group guidance intervention was administered to the same group of participants. This approach was selected because it allows direct observation of behavioral changes in the subjects as a result of the given intervention.

Research subjects consisted of 30 eighth-grade students at a junior high school, selected through purposive sampling based on the school counselor's initial identification of students who appeared to have low to moderate social skills based on observation and preliminary questionnaires. The junior high school level was chosen because early adolescence represents a critical phase of social development, during which students are constructing their social identity and seeking meaningful patterns of peer interaction (Andriani & Hariyani, 2022).

The instrument used in this study was a Social Skills Scale developed based on four aspects of social skills: (1) social interaction ability, (2) interpersonal communication skills, (3) empathy and social sensitivity, and (4) social ethics and behavioral regulation. The scale comprised 40 items using a Likert format with a 1-4 scoring range. Validity testing was conducted through Pearson correlation analysis ($r_{table} = 0.361$ for $n = 30$, $\alpha = 0.05$), and all items were declared valid with $r_{count} > r_{table}$. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.892, classified as very reliable.

The intervention consisted of six group guidance sessions, each lasting 60-90 minutes, conducted over three weeks. Each session addressed topics relevant to students' social challenges, including: building confidence in social interaction, effective communication, developing empathy, conflict resolution, and school social ethics. Techniques integrated throughout the sessions included group discussion, sociodrama, cooperative games, and homeroom. The group leader (counselor) played an active role in facilitating group dynamics, providing feedback, and creating a psychologically safe and conducive atmosphere for all group members (Azhar & Sunawan, 2025).

Pretest and posttest data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0. The analytical procedure included: (1) a normality test using Shapiro-Wilk (given $n < 50$) to verify the assumption of normal distribution, and (2) hypothesis testing using the Paired Sample T-Test to evaluate the significance of the mean difference between pretest and posttest scores. The decision criterion used a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, with H_0 rejected when the sig. (2-tailed) value < 0.05 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Social Skills

Descriptive analysis was performed on students' social skills scores at both the pretest and posttest stages. A summary of the descriptive statistics is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Social Skills Scores

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min – Max
Pretest (Before)	30	78.47	8.213	61 – 94
Posttest (After)	30	96.83	5.947	84 – 109
Gain (Difference)	30	18.37	5.128	9 – 28

Source: SPSS 25.0 analysis output

Based on Table 1, the mean social skills score increased substantially from 78.47 at pretest to 96.83 at posttest, with a mean difference of 18.37 points. The smaller standard deviation at posttest (5.947) compared to pretest (8.213) suggests that score distribution became more homogeneous after the group guidance intervention. This indicates that the intervention not only raised the group average but also reduced the gap in social skills among students.

Normality Test

Prior to hypothesis testing, a Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted to verify that the data were normally distributed, as a prerequisite for parametric statistical analysis. The normality test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Data	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Social Skills	0.962	30	0.337
Posttest Social Skills	0.951	30	0.183

Source: SPSS 25.0 analysis output

As shown in Table 2, the Shapiro-Wilk significance values for the pretest data (0.337) and posttest data (0.183) are both greater than $\alpha = 0.05$. Accordingly, the normality assumption is satisfied, and analysis can proceed using parametric statistics, specifically the Paired Sample T-Test.

Hypothesis Testing: Paired Sample T-Test

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the Paired Sample T-Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' social skills scores before and after participating in group guidance services. The hypotheses tested were H_0 : there is no significant difference in social skills scores before and after group guidance, and H_a : there is a significant difference in social skills scores before and after group guidance. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test Results

Pair	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest – Posttest	-18.367	5.128	0.936	-12.847	0.000

Source: SPSS 25.0 analysis output

df = 29; $\alpha = 0.05$; t table = 2.045

Note: negative mean value indicates pretest minus posttest difference

Table 3 shows that the obtained t value is -12.847 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Since $|t \text{ count}| = 12.847 > t \text{ table} = 2.045$ and $\text{sig. } 0.000 < 0.05$, H_0 is rejected. It can therefore be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between students' social skills scores before and after participating in group guidance services. In other words, group guidance services are proven effective in improving students' social skills at the 95% confidence level.

Discussion

The findings of this study consistently support prior research confirming the effectiveness of group guidance services in improving students' social skills. The mean score increase of 18.37 points (from 78.47 to 96.83) reflects a substantial impact from the six-session intervention. These results align with Amalia and Rusman (2025), who found significant improvements in the social interaction of junior high school students following group guidance, and with Khafidhoh (2021), who concluded that group guidance effectively enhances students' social interaction skills.

The success of this intervention is inseparable from the use of varied and contextually relevant techniques across each session. Sociodrama, for instance, provided students with opportunities to act out real social situations they commonly encounter, enabling them to practice appropriate responses without the risk of real social

consequences. Maisunah (2021) found that sociodrama effectively improved students' oral communication skills, while Silvia, Yandri, and Juliawati (2022) demonstrated that sociodrama enhanced students' confidence in speaking in front of the class. Social ethics and behavioral regulation have also been documented to improve through sociodrama, as evidenced by Rama, Sultani, and Anisah (2019).

Cooperative games integrated into several sessions proved to foster mutual trust, teamwork, and coordination among students. Noperiyanti and Hasibuan (2025) found that cooperative games in group guidance settings substantially raised junior high school students' social skills scores, particularly in collaboration and group communication. Rici and Alawiyah (2019) similarly confirmed the effectiveness of cooperative game techniques in building more comprehensive social skills.

The homeroom technique applied in this study contributed to enhanced self-disclosure and comfort in group interaction. Azizah and Murtafi'ah (2021) reported that the mean social interaction scores of students participating in homeroom-based group guidance increased from the moderate to the high category, consistent with the patterns observed in this study. Group discussion, consistently employed throughout every session, strengthened students' argumentation, active listening, and respect for differing opinions, as further confirmed by Andani, Yusmansyah, and Mayasari (2018) and Bimbingan et al. (2024).

This study also found that the socio-emotional dimension of students developed positively following the group guidance intervention. This was reflected in increased willingness to open up, socialize with peers, and build trust within the group. Andriani and Hariyani (2022), studying elementary school students, similarly found a positive influence of group guidance on students' socio-emotional dimensions, indicating that the benefits of this service transcend educational levels.

The effectiveness of group guidance in this study was also supported by several conducive factors, including high student enthusiasm, dynamic and open group atmosphere, and the counselor's active role as group leader. Fauzi and Yustiana (2024), in their literature review, emphasized that an active group leader who facilitates discussion, provides feedback, and creates a psychologically safe climate is a determinant factor in the success of group guidance services. Azhar and Sunawan (2025) similarly underscored that social skills training through group guidance facilitated by a competent counselor meaningfully contributes to the realization of child-friendly schools.

The improvement in students' interpersonal communication skills through assertiveness training within group guidance also warrants attention. Karimah, Maghfiroh, and Sukmawati (2025), in their one-group pretest-posttest study, found that a combination of group guidance and assertiveness training effectively improved students' interpersonal communication, consistent with the patterns of improvement found in this study. Group guidance provides space for students to practice expressing opinions, feelings, and needs clearly and directly while still respecting the rights of others.

Taken together, the findings of this study reinforce the conclusion of Rihana, Wita, and Gonzales (2025) that group guidance can lead students from social isolation toward more active and meaningful social engagement. Group guidance services are not merely conventional counseling activities, but rather a social learning ecosystem that enables students to grow together, learn from each other's experiences, and develop a more adaptive and functional repertoire of social behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study empirically demonstrates that group guidance services are effective in improving students' social skills in the school environment. The Paired Sample T-Test analysis using SPSS 25.0 yielded a t value of -12.847 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between students' social skills scores before and after participating in group guidance services. The mean score increased by 18.37 points, from 78.47 at pretest to 96.83 at posttest.

The use of diverse techniques across group guidance sessions—including group discussion, sociodrama, cooperative games, homeroom, and assertiveness training—contributed to improvements across multiple dimensions of social skills, encompassing social interaction, interpersonal communication, empathy, and social ethics. The success of the intervention was further supported by students' enthusiasm, a conducive group atmosphere, and the counselor's active role in facilitating group dynamics.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that group guidance services be systematically and continuously integrated into school GC programs as a primary strategy for developing students' social skills. School counselors should enhance their competencies in facilitating group dynamics and selecting techniques suited to students' individual characteristics and needs. For future research, it is suggested to employ a quasi-experimental design with a control group to strengthen internal validity, as well as to explore the long-term effects of group guidance services on students' social skills and psychological well-being

LITERATURE

- Amalia, S., & Rusman, A. (2025). The effectiveness of group guidance services in improving social interaction among eighth grade students at Budi Agung Junior High School, Medan: An experimental study. *KONSELI: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling (E-Journal)*. <https://doi.org/10.24042/khd4fv88>
- Andani, M., Yusmansyah, Y., & Mayasari, S. (2018). Penggunaan layanan bimbingan kelompok untuk meningkatkan interaksi sosial siswa. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling FKIP Unila*, 6.
- Andriani, M., & Hariyani, Y. (2022). Pengaruh layanan bimbingan kelompok terhadap sosio-emosional siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling AR-Rahman*. <https://doi.org/10.31602/jbkr.v8i1.6511>
- Azhar, N., & Sunawan, S. (2025). Social skills training and its contribution to the realization of child-friendly schools: An analysis of the impact of group guidance. *Indonesian Journal of Guidance and Counseling: Theory and Application*. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijgc.v14i1.30700>
- Azizah, N., & Murtafi'ah, A. (2021). Efektivitas layanan bimbingan kelompok teknik homeroom dalam meningkatkan interaksi sosial siswa kelas VII MTs Roudlotun Nasyiin Mojokerto. *International Virtual Conference on Islamic Guidance and Counseling*. <https://doi.org/10.18326/iciegc.v1i1.65>
- Bimbingan, J., Islam, K., Layanan, P., Kelompok, B., Meningkatkan, D., Interaksi, K., Siswa, S., Zaman, S., Widiastuti, H., Raden, U., & Palembang, F. (2024). Pengaruh layanan bimbingan kelompok dalam meningkatkan kemampuan interaksi sosial

- siswa. Ghaidan: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam dan Kemasyarakatan. <https://doi.org/10.19109/c1qnky55>
- Fauzi, I., & Yustiana, Y. (2024). Group guidance services: A literature review of social skills improvement of elementary school students. *Jurnal Paedagogy*. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v11i2.11044>
- Gresham, F. M., & Elliott, S. N. (1990). *Social skills rating system manual*. American Guidance Service.
- Karimah, L., Maghfiroh, N., & Sukmawati, B. (2025). Group guidance plus assertiveness training to improve students' interpersonal communication: One-group pretest-posttest study. *EDUCATIONE*. <https://doi.org/10.59397/edu.v4i1.152>
- Khafidhoh, I. (2021). The effectiveness of group guidance to improve students' social interaction skills. *Al Hikmah: Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.54168/ahje.v2i2.170>
- Maisunah, M. (2021). Layanan bimbingan kelompok teknik sosiodrama untuk meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi siswa. *Edu Consilium: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Pendidikan Islam*. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ec.v2i1.4257>
- Noperiyanti, Y., & Hasibuan, A. (2025). Group guidance with cooperative games to improve social skills in junior high school students. *Journal of General Education and Humanities*. <https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v4i3.620>
- Prayitno, & Amti, E. (2004). *Dasar-dasar bimbingan dan konseling*. Rineka Cipta.
- Rama, R., Sultani, S., & Anisah, L. (2019). Bimbingan kelompok teknik sosiodrama untuk meningkatkan etika pergaulan di sekolah pada siswa kelas VIII di SMP Negeri 2 Martapura. *Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling AR-Rahman*. <https://doi.org/10.31602/jbkr.v5i2.2160>
- Rici, O., & Alawiyah, T. (2019). Layanan bimbingan kelompok dengan teknik permainan kerjasama untuk meningkatkan keterampilan sosial siswa. *FOKUS (Kajian Bimbingan & Konseling dalam Pendidikan)*. <https://doi.org/10.22460/fokus.v2i5.3520>
- Rihana, N., Wita, A., & Gonzales, A. (2025). From isolation to interaction: Group counseling as a pathway to better social skills in young learners. *Journal of Early Childhood Education and Teaching (JECET)*. <https://doi.org/10.64840/jecet.v1i2.40>
- Silvia, T., Yandri, H., & Juliawati, D. (2022). Peningkatan kepercayaan diri siswa berbicara di depan kelas melalui layanan bimbingan kelompok teknik sosiodrama. *Jurnal Mahasiswa BK An-Nur: Berbeda, Bermakna, Mulia*. <https://doi.org/10.31602/jmbkan.v8i2.5540>
- Wibowo, M. E. (2005). *Konseling kelompok perkembangan*. UPT UNNES Press.